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AN  
**INQUIRY**  
INTO THE  
MOST PROPER MEANS TO BE ADOPTED  
IN THE  
**MANAGEMENT OF LYING-IN WOMEN;**  
WITH  
*CRITICAL REMARKS ON THE MEDICAL REPORT,*  
AND THE  
**Death of the Princess Charlotte**  
*OF WALES.*

—  
**BY W. M. IRELAND,**  
MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS IN LONDON; MEMBER OF  
THE NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY; LATE OF THE MEDICAL  
STAFF OF THE BRITISH ARMY, &c. &c.

—  
Turpe est aliud loqui, aliud sentire ; quanto turpius aliud scribere, aliud sentire.

SENECA.

“It is dishonourable to speak one thing and to think another : but how much more base  
is it to write that which is contrary to a man's real sentiments.”

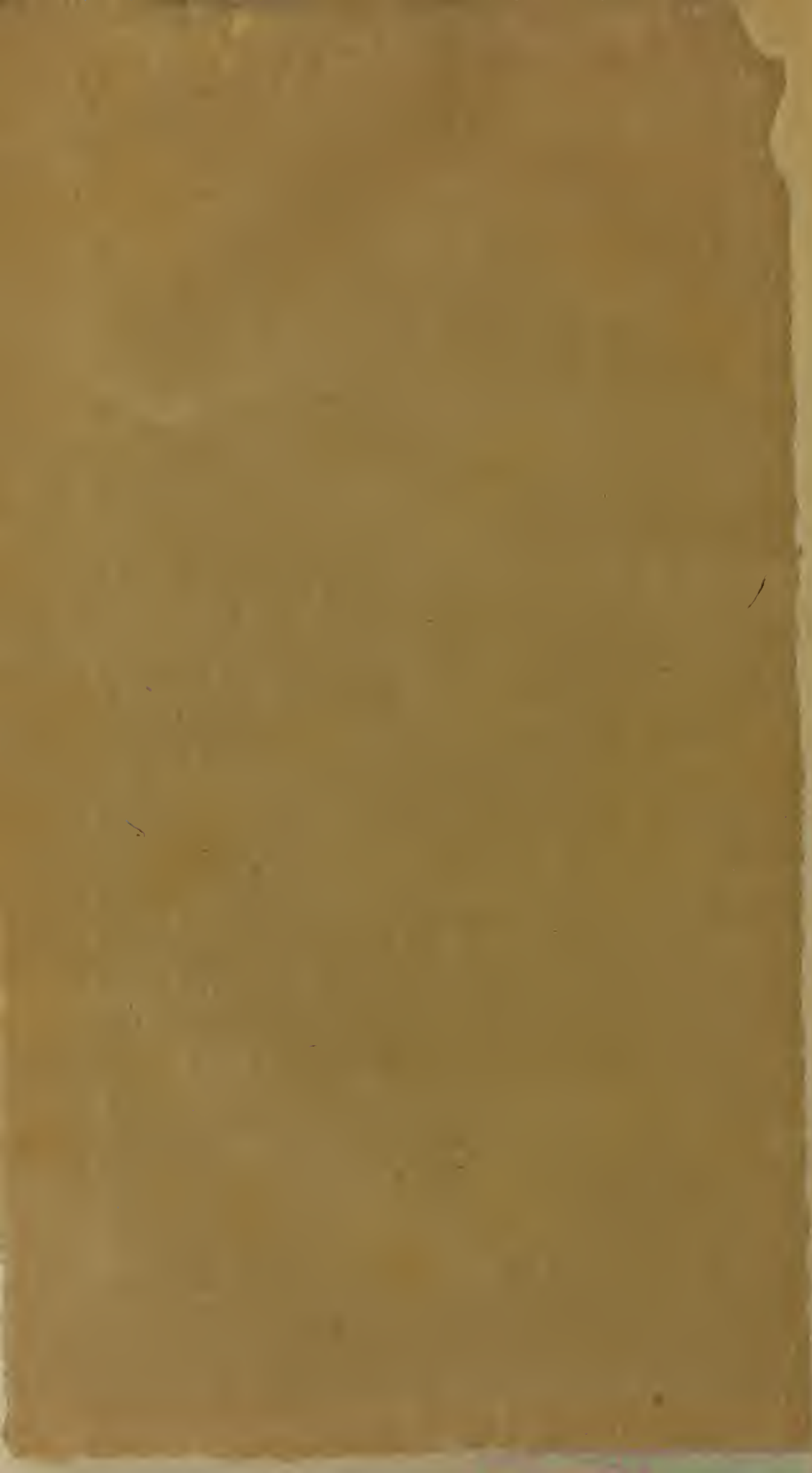
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*\* William Matthews Ireland*





## PREFATORY OBSERVATIONS.



**T**HERE is no occurrence which has taken place, perhaps within the memory of man, that has taken such an effect on the minds of the people of England, as the untimely death of the much-lamented PRINCESS CHARLOTTE of Wales. Death is awful in all its forms; but when its unrelenting jaws cannot be satiated without producing such pregnant and lasting effects on the living, its consequences are awful indeed; and cannot help making the strongest impressions of the instability of human nature on a thinking mind; while it causes the sympathetic tear to flow from all those who possess a feeling heart.

“Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus tam chari capitis.” HORACE.

“What blush or bounds shall be annexed to our grief, on losing an individual so intimately and justly esteemed.”

The *cause* and *manner* of the death of this much-lamented individual, appears to be so very extraordinary and unaccountable, that much more interest is excited in all ranks, and I may say, in all civilized nations, than otherwise would have been, had those matters been explained in a more plain, simple, and satisfactory manner. All extraordinary and interesting cases, call for the most particular examination and inquiry, whether scientifically or politically considered; for it is by this method

alone, (taking it in a scientific point of view) that the medical profession can progressively arrive at perfection; and although such examinations and inquiries may appear to be of little advantage to those not acquainted or connected with the profession; yet, it is nevertheless of the utmost necessity and importance to those who teach and practise the medical science, for the advantage of all. In a political point of view, it is the greatest injustice to the people, to withhold from the public a plain, simple, and satisfactory account of all the circumstances connected with such extraordinary and interesting cases.

In reading over the dissonant and unconnected scraps which have made their appearance through the medium of the London papers, little or nothing can be drawn, which will afford the least satisfaction as to the *cause* or *manner* of the dissolution of the personage alluded to. At length, however, we are presented with a sort of *demi-official* account, which, we are told, "*may be regarded as strictly authentic*:"—and, as this comes from men who are known to the professional world, it was to be expected that we should have been gratified with a rational and systematic, (if not with an elaborate and classical) recitation of the most particular and circumstantial facts connected with the case, which they had taken upon themselves to give a professional report—instead of the lame, unconnected, and unintelligible account, which has disgraced the pages of our profession. Had not this contradictory account been presented to the world through the medium of so respectable a publication as the LONDON MEDICAL REPOSITORY, we should not have thought it worth while to have given the subject so serious a consideration: but, as it is, we must bestow on it that attention, which the nature of the case requires. In the first

place, it is necessary that something should be said, in order to subvert, in some degree, the ill-founded opinions, and erroneous conclusions, which must be drawn by all those who read this lame report out of ENGLAND, respecting the state of our profession in that country. And, in the second place, this report may perhaps be translated into many languages, and perused by thousands, who will not read it on account of the reputation of the work, but from its relating to a personage of such eminence and worth. If nothing more satisfactory could have been offered, as an explanation of the causes of the "*lamentable termination*," than what has been presented to the public under the cloak of professional authority; in the name of common sense, why not have allowed the circumstance to have passed away in oblivion, without insulting us with such a lame and inconsistent an explanation of the distressing catastrophe?

I shall present my readers with the report at full length, as given to the world by the editors of the LONDON MEDICAL REPOSITORY; and shall make some remarks on the most glaring inconsistencies, which are intended to be saddled upon the public under the cloak of science and medical authority.—Those observations will lead me into the consideration of the means most proper to be adopted in the management of lying-in women, which shall have a place in the sequel.

## THE CASE OF THE LATE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE OF WALES.

*From The London Medical Repository, December 1, 1817.*



THE EDITORS, having been sufficiently apprized that the Profession expected from them some account of this case, the lamentable termination of which has spread such a settled gloom over the British Empire ; immediately, on learning that the Physicians who attended it did not mean to publish any statement, (a resolution in the propriety of which, under the circumstances, they perfectly coincide,) strenuously endeavoured to obtain every information respecting it, from such sources as could be depended on. Their exertions have been successful, and they are now enabled to present a report to their readers, which may be regarded as strictly authentic.

In prefacing their narrative, in this place, it is not for them to attempt to paint the simultaneous and wholly unprecedented expression of unfeigned sorrow, which the death of this excellent person, not less elevated by her virtues than by her rank, visibly imprinted on the countenances of the inhabitants of this extended realm. It spoke a language that could not be misconstrued. The profession have participated in this feeling, in common with their fellow-subjects ; and have borne a part in that extraordinary demonstration of respect for the departed, which, perpetuated in the page of history, will be contemplated by posterity as the most dignified tribute to individual worth, and the sublimest triumph of virtue, which mankind have ever witnessed : a tribute honourable to the object of it in a degree fitted to excite the envy of the proudest monarchs, and an eternal memorial of the ardent feelings of an honest-hearted, brave, and generous people. But as they are incapable of doing justice to this part of the subject, they shall leave it to abler commentators ; and proceed to detail the facts they have collected, as far as regards the case in a medical point of view.

THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE, previous to her confinement, was in good health, and immediately under the eye of her accoucheur, Sir Richard Croft, who resided at Clermont for three weeks, up to

the moment in which she was taken ill. Dr. Baillie, also, was in attendance, chiefly, we have been informed, on account of a promise exacted from him by the Princess, that he would be near her on this occasion. Her spirits were excellent, and she anticipated only the most favourable issue of the event which was hourly expected.

She was first made sensible of her approaching delivery at seven o'clock, on Monday evening, the third of November ; but the labour pains were so inefficient, although acute, as scarcely to evacuate the water, which had ruptured the membranes at the commencement of the labour ; a circumstance, however, which every accoucheur knows prognosticates nothing either uncommon or untoward. In this manner the labour proceeded, slowly, for twenty-six hours ; the Princess being frequently up and walking about, from finding that the pains almost left her when she was in the recumbent posture. About this time, also, judging from the inefficiency of the pains, and the little progress made in the labour, we understand Sir Richard Croft suspected that there were either twins, or that there existed some irregular action of the uterus : and, as it was probable a consultation might ultimately be required, he wrote to Doctor John Sims, requesting his immediate attendance. He had, in the mean time, provided whatever could be wanted, should it be found expedient to have recourse to artificial delivery.

Dr. Sims arrived at Clermont at two o'clock in the morning of Wednesday, but did not then see the Princess ; and, as the cause of this has been grossly mis-stated, we think it proper, in justification of an honourable man, and so highly respected a member of the profession as Sir Richard Croft is well known to be, to state, that we have been informed, from a quarter which we must credit, that it was proposed by Sir Richard to Dr. Sims, that he should then be introduced to the Princess ; but both Dr. Sims himself and Dr. Baillie thought his presence, at that time, could not be productive of any benefit, but might agitate the patient. Dr. Sims, therefore, declined entering the lying-in room. No consultation was at this period necessary, as the labour was evidently advancing, although slowly : but, on hearing the statement of the situation of the Princess from Sir Richard Croft, Dr. Sims concurred in the opinion that every thing should be left to Nature.

About noon, on Wednesday, it was first suspected that the child might be dead, or that it might be born in a state of suspended ani-



mation ; and every known means of recovery were immediately prepared. Still the labour continued to be scarcely progressive, the pains being such as tend to forward birth rather by moulding the head so as to admit of its easy passage, than by forcible expulsion. When this was completed, the pains became more efficient ; and, at the termination of fifty hours from the commencement of the labour, the Princess was delivered, by natural efforts, of a still-born male child. No great discharge followed the birth ; but it was soon discovered that the uterus was acting irregularly, and taking on the hour-glass contraction ; and an unfavourable separation of the placenta was anticipated. This likewise, in some degree, accounted for the protracted character of the labour.

At half-past nine o'clock, a discharge of blood occurred. Dr. Sims, who was then employed in an adjoining room in endeavours to reanimate the infant, was instantly informed of this occurrence ; and, in consultation with Sir Richard Croft, agreed that the immediate separation and removal of the after-birth was necessary. It was effected with little difficulty, and was followed by a very trifling discharge either of fluid or coagulated blood.

The Princess was now as well and composed as ladies usually are immediately after delivery ; and continued so until a quarter before twelve o'clock, taking frequently small supplies of nourishment ; but at this time she became restless and rather talkative, and complained of being sick. She vomited, but nothing was ejected, except a little camphor julep, which she had taken ; and at this moment her pulse was firm, steady, and under a hundred. She again was composed. About half past twelve, however, the breathing became impeded ; the respiratory organs were evidently under the influence of spasm, and continued in that state until she breathed her last, at half-past two o'clock ; exactly five hours and a half after her delivery.

In this afflicting state of the case, Dr. Baillie and Dr. Sims, who had been called into the room when the breathing first became affected, united their judgment and their skill with that of Sir Richard Croft, but in vain, to avert the impending calamity. Art proved unavailing, although every thing which it could devise, and which experience could suggest, was attempted.

On the seventh of November, the body was opened by Sir Everard Home, assisted by Sir David Dundas, Mr. Brande, and the Apothecary of Prince Leopold's Household ; and, we believe, the

following is a pretty accurate statement of the appearances these gentlemen observed :

The membranes of the brain presented their natural aspect. The vessels of the pia-mater were less distended with blood than was to be expected after so severe a labour. The ventricles of the brain contained very little fluid. The plexus choroides was of a pale colour, and the substance of the brain had its natural texture.

The pericardium contained two ounces of red-coloured fluid. The heart itself and the lungs were in a natural state. The stomach contained nearly three pints of liquid. The colon was distended with air. The kidneys and the other abdominal viscera were in a natural state.

The uterus contained a *considerable* quantity of blood, and extended as high up in the abdomen as the navel ; and the hour-glass contraction was still very apparent.

The foregoing narrative throws very little light upon the immediate cause of the death of the Princess. The fluid found in the pericardium might have obstructed the due action of the heart : but it is not easy to account for its presence there, nor to conceive how so large a quantity could have been effused during the short space of time that supervened to delivery, before the breathing became impeded. The quantity of the blood which was found in the uterus might have induced exhaustion ; but this opinion can only be conjectural, as it is impossible to draw any certain inference from the rather indefinite expression “considerable,” contained in the REPORT of the Surgeons. Imagination indeed has been busy, and a phalanx of casual circumstances have been arranged to account for the dissolution ; some of which are ungenerously and too unguardedly, not to say maliciously, calculated to attach blame to her attendants : but we must deprecate such expositions, as unjust to the individuals concerned, and in no degree honourable to the Profession.

We have been informed that the whole of the Royal Family are liable to spasms of a violent description ; and to this hereditary predisposition, and the increased excitability of the amiable sufferer, owing to the tedious nature of the labour, are we left to ascribe an event, which has destroyed the flattering hopes of the Nation, and lopped off the fairest branch from the stem of its Monarchal Succession.

If my reader has had patience to peruse the whole of this "*strictly authentic report*," consisting of "*information that may be depended on*," "*beliefs*," "*pretty accurate statements*," &c. &c. his indignation and disgust must be much more heightened, at the gross imposition, and lame attempt, to explain the *cause* and *manner* of the death of the Princess Charlotte, than if nothing had been said on the subject: he must have perceived that the report is full of inconsistencies, contradictions, and even BAD ENGLISH. But we will now to our task, to take notice of some of the most conspicuous and most glaring.

The Editors commence by modestly informing us, of their "having been sufficiently apprised that the profession expected from them some account of this case," which, to us, appears to be stretching the point rather too far,—at any rate, if the profession expected any thing at all from the Editors of the LONDON MEDICAL REPOSITORY, they most certainly expected something very different from what they have received.

By passing over the remainder of the prefatory part of the report, we come to that in which we are informed, that "the PRINCESS CHARLOTTE, previous to her confinement, was in good health, and immediately under the eye of her accoucheur, SIR RICHARD CROFT, who resided at Clermont for three weeks, up to the moment in which she was taken ill:" this begins well, and, if every circumstance may be considered to be as minutely stated as *time*, which is "*to the moment*," how circumstantial will be our information.

DR. BAILLIE had promised that "he would be near her on this occasion;" "her spirits were excellent, and she anticipated only the most favourable issue of the event." What a pleasing and satisfactory state every thing appears to be in,—the subject of the most perfect form, neither too young nor too old; constitution perfect, health good, spirits excel-



lent, and a Physician acquainted with her habit of body : in short, whatever predisposition there might have been, that might lead to the supposition of the slightest morbid action, means were (I suppose,) taken in due time to prevent their maturation ; but Oh ! how distressing it will be to trace the sequel. “ *Quis talia fando temperet a lachrymis.*” “ Who, in speaking such things can abstain from tears ?” At the commencement of the labour, we are told that the pains were *inefficient*, although *acute* ; it is not expected that there should be much *efficiency* in the pains at the commencement of labour, for pain is a necessary part of the process of labour, and must exist, in order to continue the muscular contraction of the uterus. Yet, as *inefficient* as these pains were, they had “ ruptured the membranes at the commencement of the labour,” “ a circumstance, (we are told) however, which every accoucheur knows, prognosticates nothing either uncommon or untoward.” Here I must observe, that the rupture of the membranes, at the commencement of the labour, is, at times, a circumstance of the greatest importance, and is frequently attended with something *uncommon* and *untoward*, and, almost at all times, with a slow and tedious labour ; for this very circumstance is a deviation from the intentions of nature, as the uterus is, by this accident deprived of its “ *wedge-like bag*,” which the membranes are intended to form in the gradual expansion of the os uteri. These are facts which every accoucheur knows, who is acquainted with the muscular action of the uterus and the principles of human physiology.

The rupture of the membranes, at the commencement of the labour, is frequently the occasion of another important circumstance, connected with the ease and safety of the delivery ; and that is, the *turning* the child in cases of malpresentation ; which is done with much less difficulty and much less pain previous to the rupture of the membranes, and the discharge of the liquor amnii. These, perhaps, are circum-

stances of very little consideration with men possessing such abilities, "and so highly respected a member of the profession as SIR RICHARD CROFT". In this *inefficient* and *passive* state, we are informed, "the labour proceeded slowly for twenty-six hours;" during which anxious and uncertain period, not a word is said of the state of the *os uteri*, or even of an EXAMINATION per vagina, that can afford us the least satisfaction of the real state of things. At length, however, it seems that SIR RICHARD himself, was rather apprehensive that all was not *right*; for the *immediate attendance* of DR. SIMS was *requested*: and, although the same *silence* is observed with respect to what change took place from the time the request was made for the *immediate attendance* of DR. SIMS, and the period at which he arrived at Clermont, "no consultation was at this time necessary," we are told. Nor can we be at all surprised at the dissatisfaction of every one who became acquainted with this very extraordinary proceeding, let him be either a *Clown* or a *Physician*; for it certainly appears to be repugnant to common sense.

Let us see, however, in what a satisfactory manner the EDITORS of the LONDON MEDICAL REPOSITORY account for what we, poor short-sighted beings, cannot understand. "We have been informed," say they, "from a quarter which we must credit, that it was proposed by SIR RICHARD to DR. SIMS, that he should then be introduced to the PRINCESS; but both DR. SIMS himself and DR. BAILLIE, thought his presence, at that time, could not be productive of any benefit, but might agitate the patient." Now I must, or, I would say, I will, (for there is no compulsory force with me, as there was with the WRITERS of the REPORT,) confess, that the attempt at an explanation of the reason why DR. SIMS did not see the PRINCESS on his arrival, is, to me, altogether unintelligible; and I rather think, that it is equally so *both* to DR. BURROWS,

myself, and MR. THOMPSON. It has not, however, come to me from a QUARTER which I MUST CREDIT.

We have not, as yet, been informed by what means SIR RICHARD became satisfied that "every thing should be left to nature;" but we are told, that DR. SIMS concurred in the opinion, on hearing the situation of the PRINCESS from SIR RICHARD CROFT; this is widely different from what I was taught, when studying Midwifery, (in the School of Denman, Osborn, and Clark;) it was a particular injunction laid on me, by my teachers, that "whenever I might be called on a consultation, never to be satisfied by HEARING a STATEMENT of the SITUATION of the WOMAN, but at all times and in all cases, to *examine* and ascertain the exact state of things at the moment for myself.

Things, however, went on in this blind and unsatisfactory state. SIR RICHARD at one time, suspecting that "there were twins, or that there existed some irregular action of the uterus:" at another, "that the child might be dead, or that it might be born in a state of suspended animation," &c. &c. till, "at the termination of fifty hours from the commencement of the labour, the PRINCESS was delivered, by natural efforts, of a still-born male child." "It was soon, however, discovered that the uterus was acting irregularly, and taking on the hour-glass contraction." This does not bespeak any very great skill on the part of her accoucheur: for it is known to all professors of midwifery, that it is in the power of the accoucheur, (by proper management,) and particularly, where the woman is delivered by *natural efforts*, to *oblige* the uterus to begin to contract at its *fundus*: for, if the uterus has the power to expel the child by *natural efforts*, it certainly, *à priori*, has the power of contraction, by *natural efforts*. I need not, I presume, tell the EDITORS of the LONDON MEDICAL REPOSITORY, that this is done by governing the expulsion of the body of the child, in such a manner, that the fundus uteri being completely emptied, and of course, will be closely

contracted before any other part of it can be empty; by which gradual process, the uterus will commence contracting at its fundus, and be completely collapsed, as the contents are slowly and gradually expelled. But we will leave this unpleasant part of the subject, and proceed to another.

After being told, that in consequence of the *hour-glass contraction* of the uterus, "an unfavourable separation of the placenta was anticipated," we are informed, that "this likewise, in some degree, accounted for the protracted character of the labour." This may be logic, but I rather suspect that the most of my readers will be inclined to add the word "*chole*" to it; while others may either doubt the perfect development of their perceptive faculties, or consider it to be entire nonsense. It certainly is substituting *cause* for *effect*; for the facts must be diametrically opposite.—Nor is this all; for, after being informed that "an unfavourable separation of the placenta was anticipated," we are told, that "at half past nine o'clock, (sometime after the delivery,) a discharge of blood occurred!" and, after leaving the poor woman in that perilous situation, another consultation was held; in which, "it was agreed that the immediate separation and removal of the afterbirth was necessary." What a judicious and skilful agreement! and, fortunately, "it was effected with little difficulty." I wish we had been informed, whether there had been any difficulty, previous to the discharge of blood, and previous to the consultation.—How often do we hear the vulgar phrase, "*too many cooks spoil the broth!*"

It appears that Dr. SIMS supposed himself in possession of more art than all the Humane Society put together; for, "he was employed in an adjoining room, at the time he was informed of the discharge of blood," "endeavouring to reanimate the infant," at least nine hours after it was suspected to be dead; (for, "it was about noon, on Wednesday, when it was first suspected that the child might be dead,") and cer-



tainly, more than half an hour after it was proved, by ocular demonstration to be lifeless. Experiments, however, are sometimes of considerable advantage.

Thus far we have traced some of the particulars of this "AUTHENTIC REPORT," as it is called; and although our readers may perceive, that we have met with anxious doubts and alarming fears; yet, they were all without foundation; if we could credit what follows,—for, we are told that "the PRINCESS was now as well and composed as ladies usually are immediately after delivery:" and continued so until a quarter before twelve o'clock, taking frequently small supplies of nourishment:" but here the scene becomes changed in a moment, for the next thing we hear of is, that "she became restless, and rather talkative, and complained of being sick." "She vomited." And lo, and behold! "nothing was ejected except a little camphor julep." This is altogether a new mode of managing women in child-bed; first, in giving them medicines before they are ill; and secondly, in giving them *camphor julep*, when they do become indisposed. But, perhaps, SIR RICHARD conceives that Royal Patients ought not to be treated like common ones: be this as it may, the poor woman, it seems, "breathed her last at half past two o'clock." And now that she is dead, the Doctors are all in a bustle, "in uniting their judgment and their skill, to avert the impending calamity." For, it is not till after she is dead, that we are told, that "in this afflicting state of the case, DR. BAILLIE and DR. SIMS, who had been called into the room, when the breathing first became affected, united their judgment and their skill with that of SIR RICHARD CROFT, but in vain, to avert the impending calamity. Art proved unavailing, although every thing which it could devise, and which experiments could suggest, was attempted."

According to this, then, it evidently appears, that much more was done, for the recovery of the child and the mother, after

they were dead, than was thought necessary to prevent their dying.—I hope, however, that the explanation of the case may appear more plain and satisfactory to my readers than it does to me; for I must confess that it is beyond my comprehension.

I shall say a few words also, on the examination of the body after death, which will be found to throw as little light on the *cause* of her death, as the preceding part of the REPORT. Indeed, the EDITORS of the LONDON MEDICAL REPOSITORY do not say, that they have received their information on this part of their REPORT, from a *quarter which they MUST CREDIT*. They only say, that “we believe the following is a pretty accurate statement of the appearances these gentlemen observed.” The *acuteness*, however, of the Dissectors, appear no less conspicuous than that of the Physicians; for the “membranes of the brain presented their natural aspect,” before the “vessels of the pia-mater:” and although we were told, in one part of the REPORT, that “nothing uncommon or untoward was prognosticated;” in another, that “every thing should be left to nature;” and after she is delivered, it is asserted, that “the PRINCESS was now as well and composed as ladies usually are, immediately after delivery;” yet, strange to say, it is found out, after she is dead, that “the labour was severe,” and that “the vessels of the pia-mater were less distended with blood, than was to be expected after so severe a labour.” This, however, coincides with the rest; for not a word is said of there being any thing severe in the process of the labour, till after the poor woman is no more.

As no morbid organic appearance could be discovered on dissection, which could in the least degree satisfactorily account for the immediate *cause* of the death of the PRINCESS, it certainly was a duty incumbent on those appointed to ascertain, (if possible,) the immediate cause, not only as a

point of honour due to them as professional men, but as an imperious justice due to the public at large. A justice, indeed, which they have a right to demand. Why, I would ask, (after the dissection was completed, and nothing could be found which would account for the immediate *cause* of her death,) why were not the contents of the *stomach* analyzed and examined? This, indeed, is a question of the greatest importance; and a question which will for ever throw an unextinguishable stigma on the characters of all those, who were in any way concerned in the management of this very extraordinary and unaccountable case.

Was Mr. BRANDE present at the dissection, merely to give a colour to the proceedings? For, we suppose that it was Mr. W. T. BRANDE, the Chymist; or was it merely out of delicacy to her *attendants*, that this very important, and absolutely necessary part of the duty of the dissectors, was passed over so lightly? O TEMPORA! O MORES!—

We shall pass over the editorial queries and quibbles, respecting the word "*considerable*," "the *fluid* found in the *pericardium*," "*hereditary spasms*," &c. &c. from their affording as little explanation or satisfaction, as to the *cause* and *manner* of her death, as the report itself: and quit this unpleasant and painful subject, which has engaged so much of our time, at the expense of our patience and feelings; trusting, at the same time, that some abler pen may be called into action, by what has been said, and bearing in my mind that, "*vivet post funera virtus*," virtue survives the grave.

*An INQUIRY into the most proper management of lying-in Women.*

Quitting the affecting and painful subject, we come next to consider the most proper means to be adopted in the management of lying-in women.

A woman, about to be confined in child-bed, is arrived at a period, when her constitution is to undergo a great change, and her body to endure great pain: for labour cannot take place without the latter, while the former is the natural consequence of her situation. The nearer a woman advances to this critical period, the greater is the care and attention required to ensure a safe and happy termination. If she be of a full and robust habit of body, it would be adviseable that a proportionate quantity of blood should be taken from her, previous to the expected period of her confinement. Great attention should be paid to the state of her bowels, never passing more than twenty-four hours without a passage.

The cathartic medicine taken, should be mild in its nature, and gentle in its action; such as, a little rhubarb and magnesia, Epsom salts, soluble tartar, senna-tea, or castor-oil. For, all compositions, in which aloes are the principal ingredient, cannot be too much reprimanded, as being productive of the most painful and troublesome complaint to which lying-in women are subject, that is, a complaint called the PILES. Aloes are known to act particularly on the rectum, which is the seat of this troublesome complaint. Hence, it is well known to those who have made the observation, that no person ever took any composition in which aloes were the chief ingredient, for any length of time, without being troubled with that painful complaint. As this circumstance is of some importance, the reader will, (I am persuaded,) pardon our digression.



The reader, perhaps, will not be dissatisfied at being informed, that the quack medicines called "SCOTCH PILLS, ANDERSON'S PILLS, LEE'S PILLS," &c. &c. are made almost entirely of ALOES. If the woman has spoken to a medical man to attend her during her confinement, her confidence is placed in him; and, it is adviseable that he should watch her situation about the expected time; giving her a few general directions respecting her situation, &c. by which means he will become a little familiar, and she satisfied in her own mind that things will go on, and terminate well. These circumstances, trifling as they may appear at first, are of the greatest importance to the woman and the practitioner; for, an opposite mode of proceeding may retard the process of labour, and thereby be the means of serious indisposition, which may end in the death of the mother and child.

Tranquillity and ease should be observed, both as to body and mind; and nothing of a heating or stimulating nature should be taken on any account, as that would be liable to produce a predisposition to inflammation and fever, with all their train of serious consequences. When the labour has commenced, every thing should be conducted with as little appearance of hurry and bustle as possible. Nor should there be too many women permitted to remain in the lying-in room, or too much noise and talk among those that do remain. The temperature of the room should be neither too hot, or too cold, but in a medium between the two.

On the accoucheur's entering the lying-in room, he should make his appearance in an easy and polite manner; and after having asked a few questions, and observed a pain or two, he will be enabled to form a pretty accurate idea of the state of the labour. If he think it necessary, (and this should never be delayed too long,) he will propose an examination, and satisfy himself as to the actual state of things. The reflections, which will naturally present themselves to his mind will be, is the woman properly formed? has she ever had children

before? is she very young, or rather advanced in years? is she of a strong, or of a delicate habit of body? or is her disposition timid, fearful, courageous, or bold? these reflections will, in in some degree, point out to the practitioner the means best adapted to meet whatever circumstances the nature of the case may require. His conduct towards the women should be delicate and gentle; blending compassionate humanity with encouragement and confidence. He should be neither too timid, nor too bold, nor haughty, nor arrogant; but execute his duty with mildness, steadiness, firmness, and judgment. Cautiously observing, at the same time, that there may be no apparent selfishness with regard to his own time.

He should not enter into the tales and jokes which every now and then are introduced among the women, nor make himself too familiar with them in light and trifling conversation; so as to lower his dignity as a professional man, or impress them with ideas of his want of sober judgment or serious reflection. He should not remain too long at a time in the lying-in room, for his presence, if long continued, will become irksome and uncomfortable, (if we may be allowed the expression,) as well as lessen their opinion of his skill and penetration.

The ignorant expressions of "*press down, bear down, hold your breath,*" &c. &c. are made use of by those only who know nothing of the principles of the profession which they pretend to follow and, when attended to, add to the sufferings and fatigues of the woman; producing, at times, a prolapsus uteri, or some other untoward and dangerous complaint. The vulgar and ignorant practice of giving the woman "*a drop of something warm,*" is equally as ruinous and dangerous as the above; for any thing which may tend to hurry the circulation of the blood, or add, in the least degree, to the heat of the body, will be liable, at all times, to produce mischievous and dangerous effects. This erroneous and destructive practice cannot, therefore, be too strongly impressed on the minds of all those who

have any thing to do with women either in labour or in child-bed. The less heating and stimulating are the substances taken by a woman in this situation, the easier and quicker will be the process of labour, and the sooner will perfect recovery take place after delivery. Every thing which is, in the least degree, either heating or stimulating in its nature or action, will be in danger of exciting the womb to too great an action, and thereby bring on a disposition to inflammation, flooding, fever, and every thing else that is bad. Indeed, there cannot be the least doubt, but that many thousands of women are hurried out of the world by those officious and ignorant people, who advise and give strong drinks to women in this situation. Nor can I pass over this part of my observations, without taking some notice of a practice, which I hope is known to no other part of the world but America: a practice which is most certainly attended with much more danger than utility. I mean the exhibition of the *ERGOT*,\* or spurred rye, in cases of lingering and tedious parturition.

The *ERGOT*, or spurred rye, is a diseased vegetable production, or a morbid modification of the grain itself, which is said to act particularly upon the uterus, and to hurry

\* "The Ergot is not peculiar to rye, but may be found in almost all gramina, in certain climates and situations. It is an elongated excrescence which fills the place of the seed, within the glume or husk of rye, as well as several other species of gramina."

"Like the generality of *sclerotiums*, it is a parasitic production; it grows as they do upon the living plant, but only when it tends towards decay, it has like them an appointed place of growth."

The learned and ingenious Mons. de Candolle, who has made this subject his particular study for many years, is of opinion that the ergot is a species of mushroom of the Genus *Sclerotium*, to which he has given the title of *clavus*; that the *spore* or organs by which the plant is reproduced, are situated at the exterior, and not in the interior; and that the spawn or seed falls to the ground, mingles with the soil, is conducted into the interior of the corn-plant by the water that feeds it, and is forwarded along the vessels by the circulating juices to the spot destined for the development of each germ.

From late experiments by Mons. Vauquelin and others, this appears, however, to be at present, a desideratum which, we may hope, will soon be settled, from the extensive knowledge and abilities of those employed in this important inquiry.

on labour, when it would be otherwise lingering and tedious. The profession has long been acquainted with a considerable number of articles in the *materia medica*, which will (when given to any extent) increase the force and action of the uterus; but, in the present state of our knowledge respecting the peculiar muscular action of that organ during the progress of delivery, and the necessary contraction and collapsion immediately after the expulsion of its contents, all those substances are happily laid aside, as dangerous and destructive. Indeed, this is acknowledged by the very advocates for the employment of this pernicious substance; for they tell us, that "it, at times, creates unnecessary sufferings to the mother, and endangers the child's life:" and, "that when given prematurely, or under improper circumstances, spurred rye has proved injurious to the mother, and still more frequently to the offspring." This, I should think, would be enough to deter any man of sense and feeling, not only from its use in his own practice, but to use his utmost endeavours in persuading others to do the same. Why, I would ask, do we advise tranquillity and ease, abstinence from every thing that is either stimulating or heating, and all the causes that are considered to act on the constitution at large, (and particularly the uterus,) to be avoided, during the period a woman is in this situation? This forced action would not cease with the expulsion of the contents of the uterus, but continue as long as the medicine has any power, and thereby flooding, with all its train of dangerous symptoms, would be produced.

To enter, however, into a minute detail of muscular action in the uterus, with a physiological explanation of the manner in which the fibres contract during labour, and collapse after delivery, would be irrelevant to the present undertaking; every well-informed practitioner, however, who is acquainted with the principles of anatomy and physiology, is sufficiently aware of the danger and impropriety of administering stimulants and emmenagogues, during the process of parturition. If nature



has fulfilled her intentions respecting formation, she will be abundantly adequate to fulfil her intentions with respect to delivery; and therefore, all additional excitement must not only be superfluous, but mischievous and dangerous; indeed, as superstition and empiricism become banished from our profession, the fundamental principles of our art becomes to be established on the basis of scientific indications, and practical facts. If, on the other hand, there has been a malformation, either on the part of the mother or the child, science has endowed the profession with the means of assisting nature, and affording relief. But this is to be done, not only with as little interference with her laws as the nature of the circumstances will admit, but with means which are the most mild, and the most easy to be performed. During the act of delivery, it is the duty of the practitioner to assist and prevent the too forcible and rapid expulsion of the infant, as this may cause an injury to be done to the external parts, and frequently an exhaustion of the action of the uterus, (from its too violent action,) which will be the means of producing a prolapsus, the hour-glass contraction, inflammation, hemorrhage, &c. &c.

From what has been said, it must appear evident to all those who are disposed to hear reason and abide by facts, that our interference with nature, where it is not positively and decidedly called for, must be attended with mischievous and dangerous consequences. If, however, the labour should be lingering and tedious, with a full pulse, heat of skin, restlessness, thirst, fever, and the os uteri dry and rigid, and, at the same time, the woman be of a full habit of body, blood-letting will be of considerable advantage. If, on the other hand, the woman should become exhausted from over fatigue or debility, and her pulse observed to flag; she should take from twenty to forty drops of hartshorn, and as many of opium, which should be repeated as often as the nature of the case may require. In every case of labour, it is of

the greatest importance to the woman that her bladder and rectum be empty.

The moment the woman is delivered, a wide bandage should be applied round the lower part of the abdomen, which should be placed smooth, and rather tight; this is of the utmost importance to the woman, as her life frequently depends on its application. I have known many instances where the woman has fainted several times from the bandage having been removed by the ignorance of the nurse; and others who have died from its not having been applied at all; this takes place from the previous powerful distention and action of the muscles of the abdomen, not only during the latter part of gestation, but during the painful process of labour, which in a moment, as it were, lose their support, by the pressure being taken off in consequence of delivery. This instantaneous and sudden change, with the quantity of blood lost at the same moment, causes the woman to faint, and from which, (if proper means be not adopted,) she may never recover.

The same circumstance takes place, whenever a patient is tapped for the dropsy: he will faint and die, if a proper bandage be not applied round the abdomen, and gradually tightened, as the fluid is allowed to escape. If, then, fainting and death are liable to take place in this case, where the support to the muscles is taken off so slowly and gradually; how much more danger must there be, where the support as well as the loss of blood is so immediate and sudden? The immediate application of the bandage, then, is a part of the duty of the accoucheur, which ought, on no account, to be neglected. The bandage having been applied, and the woman made a little comfortable, as to herself; she may be allowed to remain quiet for a few minutes, during which time, she may take a little simple nourishment, proportioned to her strength and state of exhaustion. In this state, the woman, in comparing her pre-

sent feelings with the past, conceives herself perfectly well, in her own ideas ; but that is not the case ; she is still in pain, and still in danger. She must not be allowed on any account, to take any thing hot, or any thing strong ; for the obvious reasons which have already been pointed out. She must not be allowed to talk, or ask questions ; but be kept perfectly quiet and composed. I need not, I think, caution my readers against giving CAMPHOR JULEP, immediately after delivery. She should, by no means, be covered up with a load of bed-clothes, nor should the room be kept too warm ; the light should, in a great degree, be excluded, as being particularly injurious to the eyes of the child ; and quietness strictly observed ; this cannot be too strongly impressed on the minds of all those who have the care of women in this situation. For the want of strict attention having been paid to what has been said above, thousands and thousands of women have been untimely hurried to their graves.

*Of the means to be adopted respecting the management of  
the afterbirth.*

As soon as the uterus has recovered itself from the exhaustion occasioned by the expulsion of the child, its next efforts will be to expel the placenta ; this effort will be made manifest by a slight return of pain, which must be particularly attended to by the accoucheur, for this is Nature's call for the assistance of Art.

It is necessary here to observe, that the same caution and the same attention is to be observed in this case, as was during the expulsion of the body of the child, in order to *oblige* the uterus to collapse immediately on the expulsion of the placenta. It sometimes happens, that the placenta is expelled with the child, but this is unusual. If the navel-string be dragged and hauled at, immediately after delivery, the uterus will be taken by surprise, and will not be prepared to collapse after the extraction of the afterbirth, which is frequently attended not

only with imminent danger, but with immediate death, from the sudden gush of blood which takes place in consequence of this harsh and violent interference.

It is always best to watch for the efforts of the uterus to relieve itself, which may be known by the nature of the pains ; and should it not be adequate to the expulsion with its own efforts, some slight assistance must be given, but this assistance should be offered only during the presence of a pain ; this is of the greatest importance ; for we should recollect, that if the whole or part of the placenta should, (from either disease of itself, or the uterus,) be adhering to the inside of the uterus, the blood-vessels will be torn, and their open mouths will be left bleeding, in consequence of the placenta having been torn and dragged away by violence.

Should the woman not expire from the sudden loss of blood which this practice is liable to produce, she will be reduced to such a state of extreme weakness and debility, that low fever, dropsy, or some other dangerous complaint, will be the consequence.

If, however, proper management has been adopted during the delivery, there will be no *irregular contraction* of the uterus, no HOUR-GLASS CONTRACTION, nor a *retention of the placenta*, or even hemorrhage, after its expulsion : on the other hand, should the uterus, from improper management or exhaustion, be incapable of contracting upon its contents, and, as has been before observed, expelling the placenta by its own efforts, the hand of the practitioner must be introduced into the torpid uterus, which will, by this means, be stimulated into action, and the placenta must be extracted with all the caution and care that the nature of the case may require. Should, however, the uterus still remain inactive and uncollapsed, cold applications must be resorted to, not only to the external parts, and surrounding abdomen, but to the uterus itself. It is also necessary in this case



to give a full dose of opium, cold drinks, and a free admission of cool air into the room. The destructive and ignorant practice of giving "*something hot and strong*," in order to expel the afterbirth, cannot be too much reprimanded, as being highly dangerous, and altogether injudicious, and frequently ending in the death of the unhappy woman. All visitors and talking friends should be excluded, and the woman kept as quiet and still as possible.

On the second day after delivery, it will be necessary that the woman should take some gentle cathartic medicine, and care should be taken that those which act the least on the uterus, rectum, and surrounding parts, be selected; such as senna tea, castor-oil, Epsom salts, &c. &c. and, should they not act as soon as expected, an injection should never be omitted; in this way the bowels should be kept open. During the period the woman is confined, her diet should be simple and of easy digestion, avoiding every thing, either as food or drink, which may be considered to be heating in its nature, or stimulating in its action or effects. If these rules and observations were scrupulously observed and strictly attended to, *not one woman in fifty thousand would die in child-bed.*

*Means to be adopted respecting the management of the infant.*

The moment the child has been assisted into the world, care should be taken that its breathing is not suspended by the membranes being over its nose and mouth, or the navel-string round its neck. Should this be the case, it must be immediately removed. Should the breathing be suspended from any other cause, the proper means must be adopted to restore it, such as giving it a slight slap on the back, immersing it in warm water, breathing into its mouth, and causing the lungs to be put in motion, allowing the navel-string to bleed for a few moments, &c. &c. Great care should be taken with respect to the management of the

navel. In the first place, in observing that the string be strong and well applied, so that there may not be a chance of hemorrhage coming on after the infant is dressed and laid by the side of its mother. From the fourth to the seventh day it will fall off, when it should be dressed with either a little burnt rag, a little powdered chalk, or a little fine lint, kept clean and frequently changed.

The practice of applying grated nutmeg to the part, immediately after the navel has fallen off, proceeds altogether from ignorance; for nutmeg will irritate and fret, so as to cause pain and inflammation, and frequently be attended with serious consequences, even convulsions and death. As soon as the child is dressed, it is a custom in this country to give it something by way of physic, under the idea that something of the kind is wanted in order to produce a stool; but this is certainly more from habit than from necessity; for it is not the intention of nature that a child should be born to take medicine the moment its mouth is open. When, however, the means employed are simple and not long continued, there cannot be so great an objection to it as when otherwise.

Soon after the child is born, it is intended by nature, (as is the case with all other animals of the lactiferous class,) that it should suck its mother's milk, which will produce all the action on the bowels, required by nature to evacuate their contents. Should, however, the meconium not pass away within the first twenty-four hours, it will be necessary to give some gentle cathartic medicine, or an injection; indeed, when it is found necessary to give a newborn infant cathartic medicine, it is at all times adviseable to assist its operation with an injection. I need not repeat here, that the medicine given should be the most mild in its action and effects, which can be selected, such as a little molasses and water, a watery infusion of rhubarb and molasses, equal parts; mauna, or a little castor-oil, &c. &c. which should be left off gradually as the bowels return to their natural state.

The custom also, of giving a new-born infant food, is equally as inconsistent, and as repugnant to the wise intentions of nature, as it is to drench it with physic, the moment its mouth is open. But the ignorant and the officious will say, "*poor thing, it must be starved if something is not given it to eat, for there is no milk for it, and if there was it will not suck.*" This is altogether erroneous and absurd, for if the infant be allowed to follow the dictates of nature, it will take the breast soon after it is born; and, by its continuing to suck, milk will soon be found in quantities sufficient for the purposes which nature has intended. The milk which is secreted at first, is intended by nature to act as a gentle cathartic, to pass away the first contents of the bowels, and, therefore, nothing is so proper for that purpose, as that which nature has provided.

How can it for a moment be supposed that nature has brought an infant into the world, for the purpose of taking physic the moment it is born? And why do not other animals require the same thing? *Common sense* ought to teach us better. There have been instances, it is said, where the child never could be induced to take the breast at all; but those instances must have been owing entirely to bad management, or an imperfect developement of the child's mouth, which should be at all times attended to. Some mothers will not allow the child to suck for several days, because (as they say,) *the after-pains are considerably increased, and continued longer, by that means*; but admitting this to be the case, it is purchasing ease at a very dear rate, for it is ten to one that there will be an hardened, and perhaps, a broken breast, which, in addition to the trouble and pain given at the time, *may sow the seeds of a future disease, called a CANCER.*

There is another circumstance, besides the examination of the mouth and tongue of the infant at birth, of great importance to the future state of health and happiness of the

child, which is too frequently neglected by the accoucheur; and that is, to examine that there be no other malformation, or imperfection in the child, such as an imperforated anus, imperforated urethra, imperforated vagina, distortions, &c. &c. all of which may exist; and, if neglected at birth, prove either immediately dangerous, or of the most serious consequences after. I have, within the last three months, performed two operations, for imperforated vagina, on girls, grown up to the age of eight or ten years, which might have been prevented had the accoucheur done his duty at the time of birth.

It may, perhaps, be expected that some account should be given respecting the most proper means to be adopted in the management of children, but that is not embraced in the intentions of the present sketch; a few cursory remarks, therefore, will only be offered. It has been before pointed out, that it is the intention of nature, for the infant to have no other food than its mother's milk, and, therefore, every other substance is not only likely to disagree with it, but will most certainly be attended with serious consequences.

The powers of digestion and assimilation of a new-born infant, are adapted only to the formation of chyle, and nourishment from human milk of an equal age with itself; and, as the qualities of its mother's milk change at different periods from the birth, so do the powers of digestion undergo a change to meet the alteration which nature forms for the purpose of growth and strength. If, for instance, a new-born infant should suckle a woman that has a child six months old, the difference between the powers of digestion of the infant, and the qualities and strength of the milk, will be so great, that it will disagree with the infant,—it will be *griped*, as it is called, become indisposed, sickly, and most likely die; this is a fact of such importance to the health of children, that the greatest attention should be paid to it. If, then, only the change of the age of the milk will produce such serious consequences to new-born infants, how much more is it

likely that food, which is only intended for men, should prove so destructive to their delicate organs, and power of digestion. O COMMON SENSE, where is thy sway !

Women who suckle should live on simple nourishing food, taken in quantities adapted to their strength of constitution ; their drink should be good, mild, malt liquor ; their exercise should be moderate, and as much as possible in the open air ; their minds should be kept cheerful, and in a state of tranquillity. When, however, the mother's constitution is delicate, and the child strong and forward, food may be given at an earlier period than otherwise, yet such food should be the most simple in its nature, and made to approach its mother's milk as nearly as possible.

Were these few important observations more strictly attended to, there would not be one hundredth part as many puny and sickly children as there are, nor one thousandth part as much money thrown away on "Godfrey's cordial," and other quack medicines.







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